



PRIME MINISTER • PREMIER MINISTRE

AVR - 8 2020
APR - 8 2020

Scott

Dear Premier:

In light of the global COVID-19 pandemic, our governments have taken unprecedented action to protect the health of Canadians and safeguard the Canadian economy. Thank you for your ongoing collaboration. While these are challenging times, I am confident that by working together we will successfully get through them.

I am pleased that there has already been extensive federal-provincial-territorial (FPT) engagement on COVID-19. As we discussed during our calls as a group and in bilateral discussions, coordination of FPT measures is important. We also recognized the need to ensure provinces and territories can take measures that respond to their specific circumstances. In addition to our calls, there has been regular and ongoing engagement by FPT Health Ministers and Ministers of Emergency Management, as well as discussions by FPT Ministers to collaborate on the economic response to COVID-19. This work has been supplemented by engagement of FPT senior officials on a daily basis.

During our teleconference on March 23, 2020, I sought your initial views on the *Emergencies Act*. Federal ministers of Justice, Public Safety, Health, and Agriculture and Agri-Food have since spoken to their provincial and territorial counterparts about whether measures under the *Emergencies Act* could assist our collective efforts to respond to the pandemic. During our most recent teleconference on April 2, 2020, I also indicated that we may soon initiate formal discussions with your Government.

The Honourable Scott Moe
Premier of Saskatchewan
Room 226, Legislative Building
Regina, Saskatchewan
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While the Government of Canada has not yet made a decision to invoke the *Emergencies Act*, I am writing to inform you that, as part of our efforts to ensure we are exploring all options possible to address the crisis, we are considering a declaration of a public welfare emergency. Such a decision cannot be made without your input. I am therefore formally initiating consultations with your Government under section 14 of the *Emergencies Act*.

Subject to these consultations, the declaration of a public welfare emergency may be necessary to, for example: facilitate the procurement of personal protective equipment; increase Canada's domestic capacity to produce medical supplies; ensure the integrity of the food supply chain; and declare certain work to be essential, while ensuring employees have a safe work environment. More specifically, such a declaration would allow the federal government to potentially undertake one or more of the temporary measures under paragraphs 8(1)(a), (d), and (e). The attached annex outlines potential measures pertaining to two pressing issues.

The purpose of these consultations is to seek your views on the issuance of such a declaration and whether the COVID-19 situation exceeds the capacity or authority of a province or territory or of existing federal, provincial, or territorial laws to address it.

As part of these consultations, I have asked Bill Blair, Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, to convene a teleconference of FPT Ministers responsible for Emergency Management to review our collective authorities and discuss whether the *Emergencies Act* would assist in meeting our shared objectives. I have also asked Chrystia Freeland, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, to engage with you over the coming days on a bilateral basis on this matter. Following these discussions, it is my intention to arrange a teleconference of First Ministers so that I can hear directly from you on this topic. In addition to these conversations, I would ask that you provide any written submissions by April 15, 2020.

In responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is necessary that we consider all authorities to protect the health and welfare of Canadians. Rest assured that I have no intent in interfering with actions by provincial and territorial governments in their jurisdictions. Rather, we would like to hear from you as to whether there are particular areas where federal intervention or support under the *Emergencies Act* would complement provincial and territorial efforts. Consistent with our approach to date, our intention is to achieve concerted action with the provinces and territories to address the COVID-19 emergency. Our consultations may also conclude that we can achieve our objectives through continued federal-provincial-territorial collaboration, without relying on the use of the Act.

I have enclosed a short backgrounder on the *Emergencies Act* to assist you with these consultations. Discussions that have already taken place amongst First Ministers, Ministers, and officials form part of this engagement approach. I would ask that our

consultations remain confidential to ensure a candid exchange of views. I have written a similar letter to other premiers. My Government will also be reaching out to the National Indigenous Organizations' leadership and to modern treaty holders and Indigenous governments to discuss the possible declaration of a public welfare emergency.

I am sharing this letter with: the Lieutenant Governors of the provinces, the Commissioners of the territories, Chrystia Freeland, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs; Bill Blair, Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness; Patty Hajdu, Minister of Health; Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-food; Marc Garneau, Minister of Transport; Navdeep Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry; Anita Anand, Minister of Public Services and Procurement; Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations; Marc Miller, Minister of Indigenous Services; David Lametti, Minister of Justice and Attorney General; and Jean-Yves Duclos, President of the Treasury Board and Vice-Chair of the Cabinet Committee on the federal response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

Sincerely,

